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Closing the CIA Funnel

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Some of the psychological scars are irreparable, but the lesson of the Central Intelligence Agency subsidy scandal has not been wasted. The government is about to do what it should have done in the first place.

President Johnson has accepted a special panel's finding that "no federal agency shall provide any covert financial assistance or support, direct or indirect, to any of the nation's educational or private voluntary organizations." Mr. Johnson accordingly has ordered the CIA to turn off that money tap as quickly as possible.

The President also accepted a recommendation that a committee be set up to study ways in which—through a "public-private mechanism"—the government can openly channel financial aid to such organizations for overseas activities in the national interest.

It is past time for bewailing the devious subsidy arrangement that in the end damaged both the CIA and its beneficiaries. The pertinent question is: Where do we go from here?

The panel's report and the President's response provide useful, constructive answers.

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